

Executive Committee Meeting
October 14, 2010
Platte Valley Community Center, Saratoga, WY

The meeting began with introductions and acceptance of the agenda.

New Business

NRCS Programs – Maureen Meagher from NRCS-RC&D program introduced herself and programs she will be able to work with WLCI. Her specialty is grant writing and would be willing to help in that capacity. NRCS is currently working with WLCI on Raymond Mountain Invasives and Lincoln/Uinta County Weeds.

Ms. Meagher was asked about the NRCS Sage-grouse Initiative. She did not have much information but would contact someone within NRCS to learn more about the program, and she is willing to have that person give a presentation to the EC.

- EC would like future presentation on NRCS Sage-grouse Initiative.

USGS Sage-grouse Study – Brad Fedy gave a review of three studies concerning Sage-grouse trends and seasonal habitat. These studies will be published at a later date.

John Linn and Mary Thoman thought the studies were a good first step but would like additional agriculture data and historic observations included in the study. Agriculture data that is available was noted to be already included in the study.

Bark Beetle Infestation – Steve Currey, USFS presented information on Bark Beetle infestation in northern Colorado and southwest Wyoming. The Forest Service is concerned with safety issues associated with the dead trees from the infestation. The dead trees can fall and fire danger is increased. The Forest Service has cleared approximately 600 acres. Work has been concentrated in campgrounds, authorized motorized trails and roadways; much of the work has been done by Forest Service personnel and youth crews such as WYCC.

USFS would provide a presentation on 2010 pine beetle data at the next meeting

Project Ranking – Criteria for 2011 projects were updated to give a more accurate rank of the project and to eliminate ties in ranking. It was noted that the carryover projects would consume the majority of the expected budget. Requests for funding are noted at the highest amount and does not account for project funding that may be received before the project is implemented. The project lead would be contacted to assess funding needs prior to WLCI funding. Funding must also be distributed according to federal funding allocations.

Carryover projects were accepted as listed; knowing that funding appropriation and project needs may change what will be funded.

2011 Proposed Projects were accepted in ranked order as funding allowed with the exception of Fish Creek Fence project with funding reduced to \$25,000. Monitoring results from Baggs Juniper Treatment project is needed before future funding is provided.

- The Executive Committee would like the Coordination Team to work with JIO/PAPO/NRCS on Sage-grouse issues.
- Coordination Team to provide a briefing report for transition to the new governor highlighting the work of WLCI, contribution from agencies and partnerships.

Old Business

Conservation Leases – A template is available to begin looking at the viability of conservation leases. A group is forming to work on this issue and meeting is being planned for November. Issues the group will try to address are the effects of long-term easements, mapping of conservation easements in the state, and who hold the easements. USGS would consider an in-depth study on easements if funding were available.

Ruby Pipeline – Funding has not yet been deposited with the Heritage Foundation; however, it is expected soon and will be deposited in a federated account. Craig Showalter believes the funds should be moved into an account that could generate additional funding. The Foundation is undergoing an account review; once this is done (mid-November) a teleconference needs to be scheduled with the Executive Committee to decide what type of account the funds should be housed.

The Coordination Team with the assistance of Sheila Keating, has developed a draft tracking system to track budget. The system is similar to the JIO/PAPO system. The Coordination Team is working on ranking criteria for projects using Ruby monies.

Conservation Action Plan – A review was provided of the Conservation Action Plan and its current status, how it relates to existing WLCI plans. A draft Table of Contents was shown to the group.

The Executive Committee would like a review of the first five years of WLCI for the April Meeting. Members were asked to provide summaries of resources committed to WLCI over the past four years and contact information for those involved by project.

Team Reports

Science Update – USGS hosted a briefing in Washington D.C. on landscape scale initiative Justin Caudill from Wyoming Department of Agriculture and Coordination Team was one of three presenters. He explained how priorities are developed and issues or needs in science. The Science Team met to review what was done this year and plan for the upcoming field season. The Conservation Action Plan is the top priority for USGS/WLCI. Integrated Assessment will support the Conservation Action Plan and the Science Team Strategies. The assessment should be done

around the first of 2011. The Science Team is working with the Data Management Team to have a science page on the website easily accessible and share information readily. The 2009 Annual Report is available and was given out at the meeting.

STAC – Bob Lanka was considered for the chair position of STAC; however because he is new to WLCI with his new position within WGFD he feels uncomfortable leading the group this year.. It was suggested that Dan Blake of USFWS and WLCI Coordination Team member serve as chair of STAC for at least the next year. The team is working on criteria for evaluating research projects that are submitted for funding. A review of the purpose of STAC was given.

Monitoring Team - Steve Garman and Dan Manier are co-chairing the Monitoring Team. The team is continuing to work on a monitoring database. The goal is to have a web-friendly format for accessibility. The team wondered if it was possible to review monitoring plans on new projects.

Communication Team – Serena Baker, High Desert District Public Affairs Officer, will take over lead of this team. The team will review and update the Communication Plan.

Coordination Team – A quarterly report was included in the packets. Local Project Development Team will have quarterly meetings in November.

WLCI participated in National Public Lands Day. The project site was on Bitter Creek. Rock Springs High School Environmental Science classes and Green River Expedition Academy joined with WLCI and the BLM to plant native riparian trees and shrubs.

As part of an Eagle Scout project, members of the Coordination team coordinated the project with an Eagle Scout and Bridger Coal. CT members also lent a helping hand to place Sage-grouse markers on new fencing at Bridger Coal. This was a pro-active project, on Bridger Coal's behalf, as there are no active leks in the area.

Buckhorn Well Exclosure has had donations of pipe for fencing, transportation to the site and labor to pull up the old sheep wire fence. Originally this project requested \$250,000 for installation of a steeljack fence because of the wild horse population in the area. The total cost thus far has been approximately \$250 because of the generous donations from Devon Energies and Knight Oil Tools and local volunteers. The companies that have donated will receive a Thank You from the Coordination Team and a possible press release.

Support Subcommittee – A list of suggestions to revitalize the Support Subcommittee were included in the packets. Communication will be key in keeping the committee informed and have their support for the needs of the project.

Round Robin

Don Simpson – Expressed appreciation for the tour. BLM Wyoming is in the process of building a Resource Advisory Committee. They are in need of 10 volunteers for the committee. Terms vary from one to three years with three or four meeting per year. Applications are available through the Internet.

Scott Hicks – Expressed appreciation for the tour. The field supervisor position vacated by Brian Kelly will be announced within the next couple of weeks.

John Linn – Expressed appreciation for the work done by the Coordination Team and the informative presentations.

Mary Thoman – Mary also expressed her gratitude for the Coordination Team. She is excited about the Conservation Plan and how it will help create a vision for the future of WLCI. She also thanked and expressed a concern over the continuation of support for WLCI from BLM, USFWS, and USGS. Mary was asked to do a radio interview; during the interview she promoted WLCI. Mary also noted that the Sweetwater County Conservation District had their budget drastically cut.

Cheryl Chatham – The Forest Service has filled three Forest Supervisor positions within the WLCI area.

The State of Wyoming will provide the Capital Christmas Tree. Several communities will hold events commemorating the event. Along with the tree, a call for ornaments for the tree is out. For more information on the tree, ornaments, and events go to <http://www.capitalchristmastree2010.org/index.cfm>

Randy Updike – Appreciated the warm reception for his first foray with WLCI. USGS was restructured effective Oct.1, 2010. The regions (Central Region for WLCI area) have been eliminated to bring management closer to local scientists. He is located in Denver and will try to support the needs of WLCI. Frank D'Erchia will remain the principal lead to WLCI.

Steve Ferrell – Thanked the Coordination Team for taking the time to meet with him to discuss WLCI and his role as chair. He also thanked the various agencies for their support of WLCI.

John Emmerich mentioned the WGFD Lander (Jason Hunter) and Pinedale (John Lund) offices have new supervisors, due to the retirements of the previous supervisors.

Public Comment – It was suggested the WLCI have “logo-wear” not only to promote WLCI but it could be used for Thank You gifts.

It was also brought up to be upfront about funding uncertainties so project leads know that they may not receive WLCI funding and to be prepared for that circumstance.

Next Meeting – January 12, 2011 in Cheyenne

Date for April meeting was not set, but will be set at the upcoming Ruby Pipeline funds coordination call.

Action List

- EC would like future presentation on NRCS Sage-grouse Initiative.
- The Executive Committee would like the Coordination Team to work with JIO/PAPO/NRCS on Sage-grouse issues.
- Coordination Team to provide a briefing report for transition to the new governor highlighting the work of WLCI, contribution from agencies and partnerships.
- Schedule a teleconference call for WHF/Ruby Accounts. Set April EC meeting during this call
- Members were asked to provide summaries of resources committed to WLCI over the past four years and contact information for those involved by project